

A woman with short brown hair and bangs is smiling at the camera. She is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt under a tan vest with a zipper. A small cross necklace hangs around her neck. She is holding a grey argyle sweater on a white hanger with both hands. The sweater has a diamond pattern in yellow and teal. A small label on the collar reads "elativity".

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MARCH 2010

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.....
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WELCOME TO Facets

Facet - n.

1. One of the flat surfaces cut on a gemstone.
2. The particular angle from which something is considered.

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Recycling and re-using makes good environmental and economical sense.

Cover photo: Iowa State University senior Haley Huhn, of Nevada, sports a canvas purse she bought at a garage sale, wears a shirt from Plato's Closet in Des Moines, and holds a shirt from The Loft in Ames.

Photo by Ronnie Miller/Facets

Nicole Lenz is a freelance writer. She is engaged to be married this spring and currently lives in Clive.



Peggy Best is an administrative specialist for the Center for Crops Utilization Research and the BioCentury Research Farm at Iowa State University. She is married and resides in Ames. She has one son and one stepdaughter, and two grandsons.

Clare Bills is a decorative painter and writer from Ames. She and her husband have three grown children and four grandchildren.



Kathy L. P. Cook, M.D., is a Board Certified Dermatologist. She works at Skin Solutions Dermatology in Ames.



Karen Petersen graduated from Iowa State University in family resource management. She is a Certified Financial Planner, has three grandchildren and can be found on Ada Hayden Lake kayaking.

Debra Atkinson, M.S., CSCS, graduated from Iowa State where she's also taught in the department of Kinesiology for 12 years. She has been a fitness professional — writing, speaking and practicing for 25 years. She runs, bikes, swims and plays golf in Ames with her son and Old English Sheepdog.



Amy Clark received a bachelor's degree from Iowa State University in 2003, with an emphasis in dietetics. Memberships include the American Dietetic Association and Iowa Dietetic Association. She is certified in adult weight management. Her goal at Hy-Vee is to increase awareness in the community of the impact nutrition can have on well-being. She encourages people to focus on making healthy lifestyle changes one step at a time.

Candy Anderson lives in Jewell with her husband. She is the mother of two and grandmother to six. She is the food Service director for South Hamilton School District. Her days are filled with family, friends and respite in Okoboji. Candy enjoys writing about life experiences and her passion for culinary arts.



Deborah Bunka is a freelance writer, graphic designer and jewelry makers. Her interests include politics, literature and geology. A Canadian native, she moved to Ames 12 years ago where she lives with her husband and two children.

Laura Millsaps is a local writer who contributes columns and features to Facets. She has been an Ames resident off and on since 1977, and enjoys her four sons, books and music.



Joshua Duchene is a licensed cosmetologist who works at a salon in Ames.

Jenn Boccella is a freelance writer who grew up in Ames. She is a junior at Iowa State University, majoring in communication studies/journalism. Jenn loves the written word and she has two blog sites that have a very faithful following. When not studying or writing, you can find Jenn exercising, creating videos, spending time with friends, or having a cup of coffee at Café Milo.

Contributors



Fashionably green

By JENN BOCELLA

*I*n the words of Madonna, "Strike a pose, come on, Vogue." Whether it is walking down a runway at New York Fashion week or merely stepping outside of the front door onto the chipped,

cracked sidewalk, it is fun to strike a pose — and to look good doing it. The secret to being fashionable is not about being the owner of the latest Dolce and Gabbana dress or a gorgeous Louis Vuitton handbag; the key is to simply own the outfit, however new and original or used and worn it may be.

According to an article written by Tia N. Jones titled "Going Green? Hip, Vintage Clothing Kills Two Birds With One Stone" found at EzineArticles.com, every year in the United States alone about 254 million tons of unwanted items are thrown out. Of that, about 7 percent is clothing, shoes and bedding, which adds up to about 18 million tons per year. With that in mind, choosing to shop at a consignment store, thrift store or vintage clothing boutique will save money, energy and raw materials.

Recycling clothes makes green sense. Perhaps a dress made of recycled plastics or a pair of pants sewn from bamboo are not inspiring; but what about shopping in stores where "gently used" clothing, shoes and accessories are sold? As the saying goes, "One man's trash is another man's treasure." Shopping for and wearing recycled clothing will do the Earth some good.

When it comes to consignment, thrift and vintage stores, it is all about the hunt. Will there be just the exact style of shoe to go with that outfit, and is it in the correct size? What about a shirt that fits in all the right places and looks like new? Looking to buy recycled clothing is a perfect way to practice being fashion-savvy and original — and no one ever turns down a good bargain.

If shopping in consignment stores, thrift shops and vintage clothing boutiques is not comfortable for you, how about a "Swap Party"? Invite a few of your best friends to get together and bring along 10 items — clothing, handbags, shoes, accessories, etc., for the purpose of swapping with someone else. Maybe your friend has been wearing a sweater the last couple of years that would look great with a jacket you have. If she brings it to the party, swap it out for a handbag of yours that she is always eyeing. It's fun, you are with friends, you are shopping in the privacy of your own home ... it is recycled chic.

Next time you strike a pose, maybe you will be wearing a pretty little number that someone else has worn before. And you know what? That is OK.

Iowa State University senior Haley Huhn, of Nevada, models a shirt bought at Goodwill and a pair of jeans bought at The Loft.



Photo by Ronnie Miller/Facets

Remember linoleum? For years, linoleum in a limited color palette was one of a homeowner's only flooring options for kitchens and baths. After a gamut of other products such as a less-expensive vinyl tile, laminates, hardwoods, stone, ceramic tile and marble came on the market, linoleum quickly became one of the last floorings of choice for most homeowners. In fact, when we ripped out some country blue flooring in the bathroom of our 1970s ranch home, I remember vowing to never put something that ugly in my home again.

My husband and I have spent the past few years updating our outdated home. We have added a three-season porch, resided, re-shingled and landscaped outside, and carpeted, painted and updated the inside. The one room, however, that screams 1970s is the kitchen in our open-concept home. Walk in the front door and you are welcomed by once-popular harvest gold laminate countertops and an almond kitchen sink. We have updated appliances and we made the unwise decision several years ago (prior to the birth of our six grandchildren) to carpet the floor. It is time, we have decided, to bring the center of our home into this decade and in line with the rest of our home décor. And, as long as we were going to be researching current updating options, we decided to search for economical "green" materials, at least for comparison purposes.

With a small budget for improvements we knew the oak cabinets would stay. That decision would be our first step toward our mantra of "reuse or recycle." After some discussion with my frugal husband about replacing "a perfectly serviceable" countertop, we agreed that we would replace it with a more suitable surface and would also add a backsplash and new flooring. With an abundance of information available online and through local kitchen design and flooring stores, we soon found that our problem would not be if any green kitchen materials were available, but in deciding which ones to choose.

I spoke with Randy Wilkerson at Completely Kitchens in Ames and was amazed at how much kitchen-related companies are committed to protecting our environment.

"Cabinet companies are all finding ways to go green," Wilkerson says. "For instance, the scrap lumber at some plants is being shredded and recycled for horse bedding." Companies that meet standards for the Environmental Stewardship Program must use environmentally friendly materials and production processes and must be compliant in all areas of production before they are certified. That coveted certification assures consumers that their products are eco-friendly.

"Chemicals or water used in the production processes are reclaimed, strained and recycled back into the operation," Wilkerson says. The same processes are used



Beyond broccoli... a green kitchen

By CANDY ANDERSON

in preparing other natural kitchen surfaces such as granite and slate.

Sometimes, these processes add additional costs to products, though. In terms of personal budgets and economy, Wilkerson advises consumers to ask themselves, "What is the value of green to you?" Wilkerson says that a typical kitchen update with standard materials may average about \$15,000, whereas the same kitchen going green may total about \$19,500.

But cost is not the only consideration in going green. Items such as hardwood floors, natural stones and quartz may make more sense both economically and environmentally when replacement costs are factored in.

"Wood floors, with proper care, last a long, long time," says Wilkerson. "Just refinishing them can bring them back to life and up to date with current decorating

trends. Another consideration is that a green product shipped from overseas may be 'less green' than one purchased locally because of the fuel used in shipping, and it will probably cost more."

My husband and I have discussed the latest trends of bamboo and cork flooring for our kitchen remodel. Bamboo is a current market "go green" choice because it is a grass, not a wood, and can be harvested in three to five years. I personally like the look and feel of cork flooring because it provides cushion underfoot. Because it can be harvested from the bark of a tree without cutting the tree down, cork has come to the forefront as another green flooring option. The look of hardwood flooring is appealing to us, also, especially if it is reclaimed flooring. All of

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A Green Kitchen continued from page 5
these choices could be found in a range of prices to fit our budget.

But, after much research and consideration, what am I drawn to the most? Remember linoleum? It is now and has always been one of the most renewable "green" floorings around. Made from linseed oil mixed with ground limestone, cork dust, tree resins, wood flour, zinc and pigments, it has been around for 100 years. It is biodegradable or can be ground and recycled. Now back in vogue and coming on strong

in both residential and commercial design, linoleum is available in dozens of current colors and patterns. And it has proven durability against the spills and mishaps of six grandchildren.

We have many decisions to make and our budget may not allow us to be completely eco-friendly with every item chosen for our kitchen. It is comforting to know, though, that we have options for going green that can help reduce our carbon footprints without having to sacrifice style, comfort and the enjoyment of our home.

Going green

By PEGGY BEST

When I think about how I, as one person, could make some sort of contribution to saving the environment, a few things come to mind. I do try to eliminate waste, whether it's shutting off any lights in the house that aren't necessary, taking reusable bags to the grocery store or minimizing copies of information at work.

I can't think of anybody who was better at "nonessential lighting" than my dad. If we were doing homework at the kitchen table and had one light on and there was a hint of daylight left, Dad would turn the light off and tell us to sit closer to the window. Or at night if we were reading and we'd get up to get a glass of water or go to the bathroom, intending to back to our reading in 2 1/2 seconds, the light would be off. You couldn't get ahead of the man — waste not, want not.

My husband isn't quite as bad — but close. He likes to keep the house, shall we say, "cool" in the winter. It's not bad, really, once you get used to dressing in layers and wearing a sweatshirt (with the hood up) in the house. And if I forget to turn off the kitchen light and walk into the living room, he lets me get all settled in on the couch, curled up in my blankets to stay warm, before he quietly and politely asks, "Honey, did you mean to leave that light on?"

Then there comes the issue with going "paperless" at work. I now have a beautiful Mac with a 22-inch screen. I can pull up multiple documents and spreadsheets at once so all the information is right there before my eyes. All our accounting is now available online and guaranteed to be there for the 10-year retention requirements. I still, however, find myself printing out anything

and everything related to an equipment purchase, travel documentation, or the 23 back-and-forth e-mails that state all the reasons I purchased an item from company A as opposed to the same item from company B, for the "just in case" scenario that may come down the pike in a couple of months or a couple of years. It's empowering to pull out that 2-inch-thick file and say "but on Oct. 22 of 2005 your e-mail states that it was YOUR decision to approve the purchase of that manure spreader. See, it's right here in black and white!" Sure I could recreate it all by going into the computer at that time and finding all the information I need. But I still can't get away from having that thick collection of paperwork right in my hands for eternity and beyond. Just call me old fashioned. No, wait, just call me thorough — or wasteful, whatever you choose.

One thing that I really think is cool is the reusable shopping bag. I make a big deal out of this. Every time we travel out of town we make a point to stop at different

grocery stores such as Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Kroger's, Rite-Aid, King Sooper and yes, even Piggly Wiggly. We buy an environmentally friendly shopping bag with the store logo plastered all over it, and use

"...when they ask 'paper or plastic'...we whip out the reusable bags that scream, 'Just look at us! We're saving the world!'

those when we shop here. It makes us feel, somehow, like eclectic world travelers who are out to save the world. I feel so self-important when they ask "paper or plastic" and we whip out the reusable bags that scream, "Just look at us! We're saving the world!"

OK, so maybe I can do better, and I will try. But saving the world one grocery bag at a time is at least a start.

Five ways to green your grocery list

By AMY CLARK, RD, LD

More consumers are taking an interest in a "greener," more environmentally friendly lifestyle. There are many simple changes you can make that will have a positive effect on the well-being of the planet. Here are five easy, eco-friendly ways to "green" your grocery list.

Rethink your drink bottle

Replace plastic bottles with drinking glasses or a reusable drink bottle to enjoy tap water or your favorite beverage. Consider brewing iced tea or reconstituting sports and fruit drinks to reduce packaging and plastic containers that end up in landfills.

Paper, plastic or canvas?

Choose canvas or cloth reusable shopping bags for your grocery shopping trip.



Practice recycling by reusing plastic shopping bags for your next shopping trip or to line trash containers. Smart choices for reusing paper grocery bags are as eco-friendly gift wrap or book covers or mulch in your garden.

Buy in bulk

Purchase large containers rather than several small containers. Refill smaller containers with large bottles of honey, hand soap or liquid stain removers. There's no need for individual drink boxes or bottles; just pour your favorite beverage into a

drinking glass. Consider replacing individually packaged products such as pudding, gelatin and fruit cups with the larger-size package. The larger package size helps produce less package waste and uses less resources.

Shop the perimeter

Shop closer to nature by choosing more foods from the perimeter of the store. Foods from the perimeter are whole, fresh foods — produce, meat, dairy and bread. Foods from the perimeter are less processed and provide natural health benefits.

Choose more organic or locally grown products

For many people, buying organic is an environment-friendly statement. For others, buying organic means supporting smaller farms and local agriculture. The Organic Trade Association cites the following benefits to organic farming practices: replenishing and maintaining soil fertility; eliminating the use of toxic chemicals; and building a biologically diverse agriculture. While many people buy organic food based on the idea that it is more nutritious, the American Dietetic Association agrees that organically grown food provides the same amount of vitamins and minerals as food that was conventionally grown. The difference is that organic food is grown chemical-free.



This information is not intended as medical advice. Please consult a medical professional for individual advice.

Living the ultimate green life

By JENN BOCCELLA

Sutting the lights off when leaving a room, setting the thermostat a few degrees lower in the winter and a few degrees higher in the summer, taking shorter showers, drinking from a reusable water bottle ... all familiar ideas for going green. But what about training for a triathlon, painting a picture, sewing a quilt, or baking chocolate chip cookies? Are these eco-friendly ideas? Is there a connection between renewing Earth's resources and using one's gifts? Perhaps.

Working to make the Earth a better place takes commitment. But somehow life becomes more about speed and convenience than good stewardship. So unplugging the stereo when done, or riding a bicycle instead of driving a car don't come easily. It takes conscious effort. Well, so does recycling, renewing or restoring oneself. Life is stressful: getting caught up with life's demands; working on neverending "to-do" lists. Where is the passion and zeal for life in

the midst of all that?

Without a doubt, working to keep the environment clean and pure is essential; but isn't it also important to recycle, renew or restore one's passion for life? Isn't it time to "go green" on a very personal level? Training for a triathlon, painting a picture, sewing a quilt and baking cookies ... things that

action. It seems that the trees outside and having a passion for baking cookies have absolutely nothing in common, but they do — simply buying organic eggs and milk is a step toward going green. With a little extra energy and some creativity, most any activity to be passionate about can be made green.

Are you passionate about art? Don't be afraid to pick up a brush and canvas to create your masterpiece. Rather than turning on the light to paint, pull up the shades and paint by the rays of the sun. Maybe a needle and thread create excitement and pleasure; so dig out those beloved T-shirts that represent good memories gone by and create a T-shirt quilt! And what about those chocolate chip cookies? Use organic milk and eggs and passionately whip up something that makes you feel good.

Going green and renewing a passion: Put them together and it is a perfect combination for living the ultimate green life.

...isn't it also important to recycle, renew or restore one's passion for life?

so often take second place to the press of life. Reviving or recycling an old passion is bound to dramatically change one's outlook on life. It can bring satisfaction, a new sense of purpose and inner joy. All it takes is some conscious effort in self-exploration and

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SOMETHING to look forward to

By JOSHUA DUCHENE

Q: *Is ceramic or a titanium plated flat iron better?*

A: Both ceramic and titanium plated flat irons are good choices when choosing a flat iron. They both heat up fast and hold the heat evenly. Titanium is lighter than ceramic, so you will find that most titanium flat irons are lighter and easier to handle. After recently going to a hair show and talking with different hair artists who have recently switched over to titanium, I have found that titanium flat irons do not hold as much product buildup on the plates. This is good because when product builds up on the plates it tends to pull your hair and instead of straightening the hair, it becomes frizzy. Titanium is also scratch resistant and very durable so it will last you many years. Although titanium flat irons are more expensive, you will be getting more for your money by going with a titanium plated flat iron.

Joshua Duchene is a licensed cosmetologist who works at a salon in Ames. Do you have a question about hair or makeup? E-mail him at thesalon2008@yahoo.com.

BUY GREEN, SAVE GREEN, BE GREEN WITH LOCAL PRODUCE

By LAURA MILLSAPS

No one in Iowa needs to be told the advantage of locally grown tomatoes and sweet corn during the summer. They get sold on taste alone.

But for those who think buying local fruits and veggies at farmers markets is for the yuppie-and-granola crowd who can afford to spend money to be environmentally conscious, think again.

According to Rich Pirog, associate director at the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, the locally grown harvest last summer was priced the same or even cheaper than supermarket fresh goods. The results of the center's research were published in December, and might be something to keep in mind as you're making your grocery list in the warm months to come.

"We wanted to answer a simple question," said Pirog, who collaborated on the study with Iowa State University graduate student Nick McCann. "Is local food more expensive?"

The study surveyed prices for eight different vegetables sold at Iowa farmers' markets in Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Ames and Iowa City. On the same day, prices were documented for produce from national or international sources being sold at supermarket chains in those cities. Prices were checked on five days during July and August.

Pirog said produce items had to be similar in order to make accurate comparisons. "Not to be funny, but we had to compare apples to apples in this research," he said. For example, organic certified produce was not included in the study because it would affect pricing for an item.

The results showed an average price of \$1.25 per pound for locally grown zucchini, summer squash, cucumbers, string beans, cabbage, onions, tomatoes and sweet corn from a farmers' market, compared with \$1.39 per pound for nonlocal items from a supermarket.

The study also took a look at fresh meat and eggs, and while researchers say they had a difficult time finding similar products at a range of locations for accurate comparison, they did note that locally grown ground beef and bone-in pork chops in butcher shops were similar in price to non-local products sold in supermarkets.

Pirog cautioned that while it is difficult to compare the energy consumption associated with local versus nonlocal produce, the issue of price, at least in season, seems no longer a reason to stick to the supermarket chains.

"The key reason people purchase food is for freshness and quality," he said. "Environmental and economic considerations come second. But based on this study, we may have helped break a myth that was out there, that buying local was more expensive. Considering all these factors — freshness, quality, and value — it makes good sense for consumers to patronize farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture programs, or supermarket chains that carry locally grown produce."

Another economy-minded reason to buy local and green? It may help Iowa gain jobs. Other recent Leopold Center studies found that the increased demand for local fruits and vegetables could mean more jobs and more labor income circulating in the state's economy, said Pirog.

With that information in mind, those locally grown cukes and zukes may be green in more ways than just one.

To see the complete studies, as well as more ideas and research about environmentally sustainable agriculture go to [www.leopold.iastate.edu](http://leopold.iastate.edu).



By Ronnie Miller/Facets file photo

Ames Farmers' Market vendor Ron Burke, of Bettendorf, talks to Sue Deblieck, of Ames about his product, "Nature's Bread Basket Bakery," during the market May 17, 2008, at Main Street Depot.

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march CALENDAR

MONDAY, MARCH 1

Women, Leadership and Service — Jackie Norris, a senior advisor to the Corporation for National and Community Service, will speak at 8 p.m. in the Great Hall at the Memorial Union in Ames. Cost is free.

THURSDAY, MARCH 4

Naturally 7 — Show begins at 7:30 p.m. at C.Y. Stephens Auditorium in Ames. Tickets are \$37.50 and are available at Stephens Auditorium ticket office and all Ticketmaster outlets.

FRIDAY, MARCH 5

Delbert McClinton — Show begins at 8 p.m. at the Val Air Ballroom, 301 Ashworth Road, in West Des Moines. Tickets are \$35 and are available at all Ticketmaster locations. Doors open at 7 p.m. Call (515) 223-6152 for more information.

"The Importance of Being Earnest" — Oscar Wilde's trivial comedy for serious people involves two dashing young men who have both taken the name Ernest to make themselves more appealing to women. When two women find the name so romantic that they declare they could not love any man not named Ernest, Jack and Algernon must find a way to keep lying or change their names immediately. Show begins at 7:30 p.m. at Fisher Theater. Tickets are \$8 to \$15 and are available through Stephens Box Office, through Ticketmaster or at the door.

SATURDAY, MARCH 6

"The Importance of Being Earnest" — Show begins at

7:30 p.m. at Fisher Theater. Tickets are \$8 to \$15 and are available through Stephens Box Office, through Ticketmaster or at the door.

SUNDAY, MARCH 7

"The Importance of Being Earnest" — Show begins at 2 p.m. at Fisher Theater. Tickets are \$8 to \$15, and are available through Stephens Box Office, through Ticketmaster or at the door.

Katherine Eberle — Eberle, a mezzo-soprano soloist, will perform at 3 p.m. at the Martha-Ellen Tye Recital Hall in the Music Building on the ISU campus. Cost is free.

TUESDAY, MARCH 9

Tuesday Tea — Come to the Farm House Museum to enjoy tea and conversation. Tea begins at noon. Cost is free.

THURSDAY, MARCH 11

Le Grand Cirque — Show begins at 7:30 p.m. at C.Y. Stephens Auditorium in Ames. Tickets are \$37, \$33, \$25 and \$20, and are available at Stephens Auditorium ticket office and all Ticketmaster outlets.

FRIDAY, MARCH 12 and SATURDAY, MARCH 13

Women of Faith, Over the Top — A 2-day event featuring several speakers such as Lisa Whelchel and Mary Beth and Steven Curtis Chapman. Event runs from 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m., and 7-9:30 p.m. Friday, and from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday at Veterans Memorial Auditorium in Des Moines. Cost is \$99 per person. Register online at www.womenoffaith.com/desmoines/ or call 1-888-49-FAITH.

TUESDAY, MARCH 23

Floral Design Series Workshop — Come to Reiman Gardens and learn the tips and skills used by professionals to create your own one-of-a-kind floral design. Those who complete all nine classes will receive a floral design certificate from Reiman Gardens.

Avenue Q — Show begins at 7:30 p.m. at C.Y. Stephens Auditorium in Ames. Part of the Iowa State Performing Arts Series. Tickets are \$47, \$43, \$25 and \$20, and are available at Stephens Auditorium ticket office and all Ticketmaster outlets.

THURSDAY, MARCH 25

Black Eyed Peas — Show begins at 7:30 p.m. at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines. Tickets are \$80.50, \$60.50 and \$39.50, and are available at the Wells Fargo Arena Box Office, all Dahl's Foods locations, by phone at (866) 55-DAHLS, or online at www.dahlstickets.com.

FRIDAY, MARCH 26

Brunnier in Bloom opening night — This event showcases the talents of Ames-area floral designers as they are challenged to create arrangements inspired by works of art in the museum's permanent collection. Event runs from 6-8 p.m. Cost is free.

SATURDAY, MARCH 27

Brunnier in Bloom — Celebrated spring and the current exhibitions during this event, the museum's annual pairing of beautiful art and fabulous flowers. Event runs from 1-4 p.m. Cost is free.

The time is right for saving energy

By JIM CLARK

If you're a typical Ames homeowner, you have probably thought about lowering your home energy use — whether for financial, environmental, and/or ethical reasons — but you're unsure where to start. Sure, you know about lowering the thermostat in the winter and installing compact fluorescent light bulbs, but what next? How much insulation is enough? What about replacing my windows or having a radiant barrier installed in the attic? Amid the often-exaggerated claims of advertisements, it can be difficult to get unbiased, accurate information geared towards your specific situation. Based upon several hundred energy audits in Ames, here are some general tips for the best ways to save energy in your home.

Tip No. 1: Proceed in this order: (1) conserve, (2) improve efficiency and (3) consider renewable energy.

Begin by reducing your use through common sense measures and altering your habits. Follow that up with improving the "hard fixes" of your home, such as with insulation, sealing leaks, and more efficient furnace, air conditioner, refrigerator, clothes washer and other appliances. Then, after you have lowered your energy needs through these methods, you are in a position to explore solar hot water, photovoltaic systems and other alternatives.

Tip No. 2: Assess insulation, stop infiltration, and don't forget ventilation.

The cost-effectiveness of adding insulation has never been better, due to increasing energy costs and exceptional utility rebates and federal tax credits. Determining the current level of insulation in your home and analyzing options, costs and benefits of adding more is a logical first step for energy efficiency improvements.

Insulation does not stop leaks, just as a fleece jacket without a shell layer does not stop the wind from chilling you on a

blustery winter day. Locating and sealing air leaks (infiltration) in your home is necessary to avoid wasted energy and potentially damaging moist air moving through your walls and ceiling. Having a blower door test conducted on your home is the best way to detect leaks.

The confusing component of sealing leaks is the seemingly conflicting fact that you need to have an adequate amount of ventilation in your home to exhaust moisture and indoor air pollutants. The distinction is that this exhausted air should occur by way of a low-speed, continuously operating fan or heat recovery ventilator, rather than through dozens of gaps and penetrations of your walls and ceiling. The benefits with this approach are that you: (1) have control over the amount of ventilation, (2) do not suffer from draftiness on windy days and stale air on calm days, and (3) do not risk mold and structural decay within your walls, attic and other hidden locations.

Tip No. 3: Window replacement is usually a multiple-decade payback if you are only considering utility bill savings.

Many good reasons exist for replacing your windows. Perhaps your current windows are difficult to operate, the wood is rotting or they require frequent maintenance. Maybe they are an undesired source of entertainment for your children with exquisite etchings of frost on winter mornings. Or, maybe you're factoring in the potential of recouping some of the expense when you sell your home. All are valid justifications. However, don't be misled to think that you will quickly recover the expense of window replacement — versus sealing any leaks on



your existing ones — through lowered utility bills alone. It very likely won't happen.

Tip No. 4: Don't get emotionally attached to your appliances.

If you want to keep your 1970's shag carpet and lava lamps, fine. But if your refrigerator is avocado green and you bought your furnace the year that you voted for Jimmy Carter or Ronald Reagan, it's time to upgrade. This model year's refrigerators, clothes washers, dishwashers and central air conditioners use 30 to 50 percent less energy than they did 15 years ago. A new energy-efficient furnace uses 15 to 20 percent less fuel than the typical furnace from 1995. And, if saving hundreds of dollars per year on your utility bills isn't enough to motivate you, keep reading.

Tip No. 5: Take advantage of utility incentives, rebates and federal tax credits.

City of Ames and Alliant Energy incentives and rebates, along with federal tax credits, are now available for every improvement mentioned above. For example, the City of Ames offers free residential energy audits (including a blower door test) and rebates for energy efficient air conditioners, refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, clothes washers and lighting.

Don't delay. With the right choices, your net cost for improving your home's energy efficiency is often recouped in a few years, with ongoing savings and increased home value thereafter.

Jim Clark is a certified energy auditor with his business, Sustainable Living Solutions. He is contracted with the City of Ames to provide free residential energy audits.

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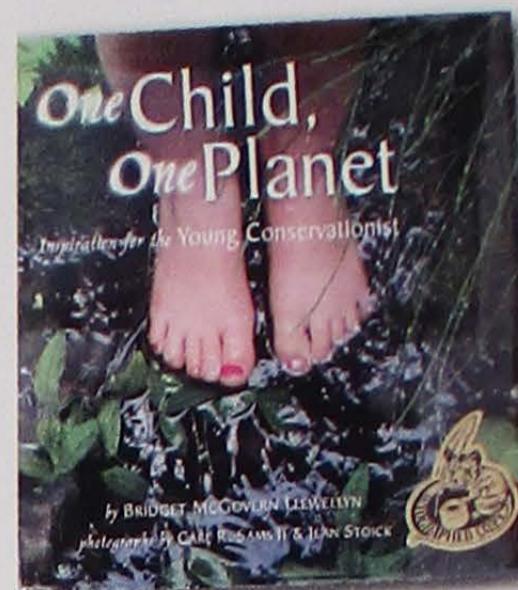
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Going green without feeling blue

BY DEBRA ATKINSON

You have the urge to "go green," but both the impending imposition it will be and the mystery of just how to begin keep you from actually doing so. Sound at all familiar? If you're like many "green" people, it happens slowly and over time until one day someone actually gives you the label. So it was for Kim Smith, of Ames. She was surprised to find that her name landed on my desk while seeking out someone who fit that description in and out of her exercise dedication.

Kim is a yoga instructor and even grew into that organically. She began teaching twice a week four years ago in the yard of a rental property near the garden that was a first-time endeavor for her at the same time. A snapshot of her life now might scare you if you're not yet green. She lives on what next year will be a 100 percent organically farmed acreage, often rides her bike to work at Wheatsfield Grocery during more clement seasons, shares her car with her boyfriend, and works toward buying in bulk to use less packaging.

Kim's advice to getting started? Start small and easy. She suggests refurbishing old clothing instead of buying new, or bringing your own jar when buying in bulk. The convoluted idea of running out to buy more of anything in an effort to go green misses the mark. The next time you do buy, take a small step.

- Look at labels. Start reading where it's from and buy local when you have a choice. Buy less processed foods with fewer chemicals and gradually consider a shift toward organic. Eat less food processed in a plant and more plant foods.

- Buy in bulk when it makes sense. When buying staples that last and items you go through regularly, the bigger form you purchase them in, the less packaging involved. Buying in bulk makes sense in some cases, not in all. Make sure you aren't purchasing something that will spoil or expire before you can use it.

- Turn off the water when you're brushing your teeth and catch the water as the shower warms up for the pet's drinking water or watering plants.

- As cleaning supplies run out, replace them with natural cleaners. Look into essential oils that might be costly at first but take just a few drops mixed with water to create bottles full of cleaner for the year to come. These come in handy for cleaning your yoga mat, exercise ball or other equipment

where your face and hands come in close contact. The right blend of essential oils has disinfectant properties without harsh chemicals for you or your environment.

- Eliminate "errands" in your day whenever possible. Make your trips all together when you have to commute anyway. Put more people in your car if you're making a trip. Coordinate the household so that you're leaving together and can return together.
- Reduce your curbside "in" box. If armloads of catalogs making their way to your home regularly bother you, set aside an hour to make phone calls to request that

you get those online only or not at all.

- If it isn't beautiful, useful or joyful, eliminate it. Give it to someone who might think so.

Making an effort to do better by the community and environment doesn't have to inconvenience your family. Health and wellness improve most significantly from small steps taken daily, such as walking more and driving less, or making an effort to consume less overall. Like exercise and nutrition, it isn't about a need to be perfect, just regularly better. Take Kim's lead, and you may find one day you too have gone green.

“Reduce your curbside “in” box. If armloads of catalogs making their way to your home regularly bother you, set aside an hour to make phone calls to request that you get those online only or not at all.”



FOOD**bites**

Penne pesto —

The tasting of the green

By DEBORAH BUNKA

With the possible exception of pasta primavera, what other pasta dish evokes the freshness of spring-like penne drenched with beautiful, deep green pesto sauce? The intoxicating aroma of freshly crushed basil added to a fragrant puree of parsley and garlic will make you long for spring's arrival and the possibility of finding these ingredients in your own garden.

Pesto originated in the Liguria region of northern Italy, where all of the ingredients in the sauce, including the olives used to make the oil, were grown. The ancient method of preparation is to pound the ingredients (except for the parmesan) with a marble mortar and a wooden pestle — the origin of the word pesto. If you have the time and the tools, I would suggest you try it this way at least once. The pounding and crushing of the leaves allows for the full release of the herbal fragrance in a way that a food processor simply cannot duplicate. It is divine.

A little note on the parsley question: curly leaf vs. flat leaf? Historically, curly leaf parsley became popular because it was easier to distinguish it from highly poisonous hemlock than flat-leaf parsley. Since this is not a problem most of us will ever encounter, I recommend leaving the curly stuff for garnishing. Flat leaf parsley is far more flavorful.

Growing your own

For some good, basic information on growing basil, parsley and garlic indoors or outside, check out these sites on the internet: www.theherbgardener.blogspot.com and www.gardenofeaden.blogspot.com. They also provide information on harvesting, preparing and storing what you grow. Their philosophies stress organic growing and good environmental practices, as well as using the growing of herbs as a way to interest children in planting and nature.

Pesto Sauce

Yield: 2.5 Cups

Ingredients

- 2 c firmly packed fresh parsley
- ½ c fresh basil
- ½ c olive oil
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and chopped
- salt & pepper, to taste
- ¼ c chopped pine nuts
- ½ c grated Parmesan cheese

Instructions

Break off all thick or overly-long leaf stems from parsley and basil. Place all ingredients except cheese in a food processor (or blender) and puree until smooth, stopping occasionally to scrape down the sides of the processor with a spatula. Add in parmesan and pulse until mixed well.

Note

This sauce can be a great addition to soups or stews. Also, try mixing in cream cheese to make a delicious spread.



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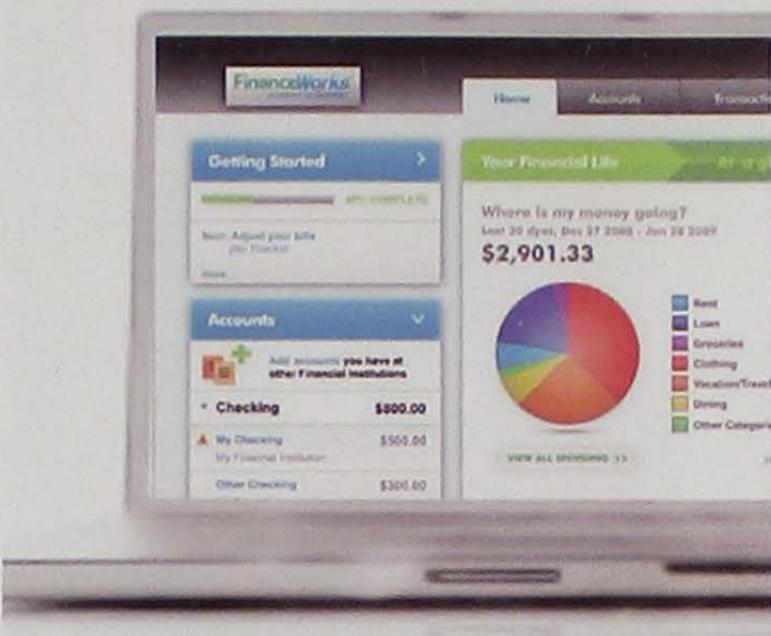
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Saving some green

By KAREN PETERSEN

How do you save a little green?

I surveyed local women ages 22 to 74 for ways they save money. No matter what the age, the changes we make to save money are usually about food and clothing. Here are some common and not so common methods to save.

Clothes

- I pretend I am in France when I do my laundry; I hang my clothes to dry over my heat vent to save money, and clothes last longer.
- My older washer leaves the clothes very wet; I dry in the dryer for 10 to 15 minutes to take the wrinkles out then hang the clothes to dry. This is a great method to save electricity and add moisture to a dry house.
- Our teenager buys many clothes at Salvation Army and Goodwill (when we aren't buying her \$60 jeans).
- I shop Goodwill, Salvation Army, and Duck Worth Wearing as often as I can. And by the time you read this there will be another clothing consignment shop in Ames.
- I do like nice clothes, so to cut back in that area I've put my credit card in my desk drawer to cut down on impulse clothing buying. If I have to go home and think about some garment I've tried on, I may decide I really don't need it.
- I shop locally, even if prices are slightly higher, the gas to Des Moines evens it out.

Ambitious and creative ways to save

- We try to reuse and re-purpose as much as possible. For example, we purchased a comforter from Goodwill for \$2. I took it apart; one of the fabrics was used to make a bed skirt, the batting was used to stuff pillows.

Eating

- Buy from a warehouse store, but only those items you use in large quantities.
- My absolute favorite is to cook up a storm. It saves money in so many ways. This week we are making cheese-fresh mozzarella.
- I cook for my neighbors — the one who snow blows my drive. They get a good meal and I don't pay for snow removal.
- We eat out less and when we do eat out, we share a meal. This strategy also helps with our weight loss/improved health goal.
- When we eat out we choose local/non-chain restaurants. We want to support local businesses that may be struggling.
- I always pack my lunch using leftovers. Saves lunch money and helps me not waste food.
- I never enter a grocery store without a list. I shop only once a week, and if an additional trip to the store is necessary, I send someone else.
- Gardening is our method for wonderful, nutritious, less expensive food and great exercise.

Sushi or sofa?

• Last spring I got hooked on sushi and since it's like a binge, it is amazing to see how much I spend on sushi. It's less the dollar amount and more that the money is just gone and most of the time, it was no special event — just easier at the moment. I've never gotten food poisoning but seeing the amount I spend makes me sick to my stomach. I could have bought another sofa with that money. (I'm redecorating.)

Often heard

- I put off having my hair cut for months at a time. (My ears need the extra cover/protection during winter anyway).
- No more highlights for my hair.
- I use the library for books, movies and magazines.
- We are willing to save in many ways, but there are some parts of our lives that are not negotiable.

Here are some will nots

- I won't consider buying highly processed foods, even if there is a cents-off coupon. I figure a diet loaded with processed foods will cost me more in medical bills in the long term.
- I buy quality food ingredients and meat — don't skimp there. Plan meals to ensure all ingredients are used.
- Never skimp on scheduled car maintenance.
- Life is short and I will not give up my vacations — that is non-negotiable. I will go somewhere warm to recharge my mental and physical batteries.
- I always buy good quality facial tissues; soft is important to me.
- I won't give up gifts to family, eating dinner out occasionally, or buying books and chocolate.
- I wear several layers of clothing all winter to save on the heating bill, but I will not give up great, strong coffee, linen pillow cases, and skiing in Colorado.

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SKINcare

Go green with skin care

Going green or natural in skin care is the "in" thing to do, as in many other facets of our life. Did you know the meaning of natural has no definition by the FDA. All ingredients are chemicals by definition. However, there are several common definitions of natural, including "present in nature or produced by nature" or "neither artificial or pathologic." Another definition is "using botanical sources, ingredients currently existing in or formed by nature, without use of synthetic chemicals and manufactured in such a way to preserve the integrity of the ingredients." Sources include botanicals (plants and extracts, herbs, fruits, flowers), earth and minerals, sea and water. Natural and green claims on labels are not regulated by the FDA. Natural has marketing value to promote skin care and cosmetic products to consumers.

There are more than 15 million Web sites that tout natural skin care products. These natural ingredients can cleanse, tone,

moisturize, shave, protect the skin from the sun, be anti-aging, anti-acne and so on. Natural ingredients have been used for centuries and are in approximately half of all new skin care products. Claims of the benefits of natural ingredients often do not have much science behind them. I will discuss a few natural ingredients that can be helpful that do have some scientific basis to support the claims.

Colloidal oatmeal comes from finely ground oatmeal. There are multiple active fractions of colloidal oatmeal, including oat lipids and avenathramides, which have anti-atherogenic and anti-inflammatory effects. Avenathramides in 3 percent concentration when compared to 1 percent hydrocortisone have similar ability to suppress skin inflammation. Clinically this is used as a skin protectant, for treatment of dry itchy skin, and for cleansing and moisturizing. Aveeno Naturals utilize colloidal oatmeal in several of product lines, including the baby line.

By KATHY COOK, MD

Active soy can help decrease pigmentation by interfering with a step in the melanin (pigment) pathway. Active soy is in Aveeno Positively Radiant lotion.

Feverfew is a flowering plant from the daisy family that has been used for thousands of years. It has a powerful irritant that must be removed by purification prior to use. Feverfew has nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory properties and is an antioxidant which may be useful in the skin condition acne rosacea. Its calming properties are in the Aveeno Ultra Calming line.

Coffee berry extract comes from the unripe stage of the coffee berry. This has been shown to improve fine lines, wrinkles and pigmentation and is found in the product line Revaleskin (available in physicians office only).

Green tea is rich in antioxidants that may help decrease UV damage and be useful in rosacea. White tea might limit sun-induced

Skin Care please see page 18

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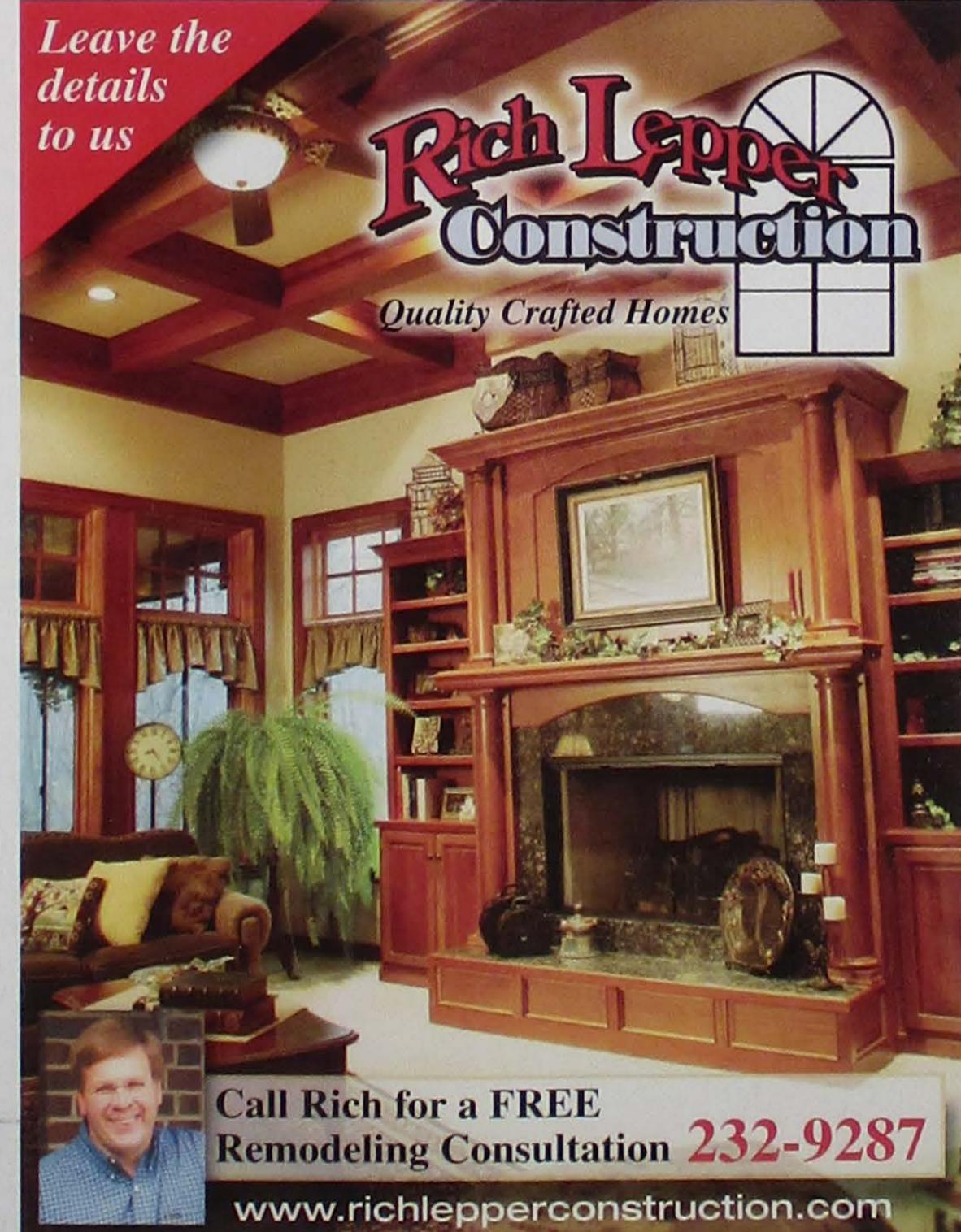
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Skin Care continued from page 17

damage also and is found in Origins products called A Perfect World.

Retinoids and Vitamin A products can reverse wrinkles, and Vitamin C protects against future wrinkles. Their effects have been studied extensively. These form the backbone of my recommended minimum skin care regimen.

There are many other natural ingredients with effects on the skin too numerous to mention. I do hear from patients all the time that they are using a "natural" product that could not be causing their rash. Natural does not mean it will not cause skin irritation or allergic contact dermatitis, as there are many reports of these types of reactions. Many essential oils irritate or inflame sensitive skin. Problems with naturals also include quality control in production, or the concentration level in products may be so low that there is no effect. There is research into natural products that show the positive benefits to the skin. I would recommend you use naturals from well-known companies and seek the advice of a dermatologist.



The scoop on eco-friendly paints

By CLARE BILLS

It's good to be green when it comes to paint — and not just mossy, lime or forest.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, indoor air is one of the top five leading health risks. Far more pollutants loom inside than outside, and the lack of ventilation compounds the problem. During the winter months, when our homes are buttoned up tight, indoor air can be even more toxic. Cleaning products, paints and other chemicals emit gasses into the air even when they are closed up, causing a range of potential health problems from headaches, dizziness and fatigue to asthma and even cancer and heart disease, according to www.greenlivingideas.com. These smells and chemicals are called VOC (volatile organic compounds). Manufacturers are now producing paints that have greatly reduced amounts of VOC and they are available locally wherever paints are sold.

There are three categories of eco-friendly paints: low VOC, zero VOC and natural. The need for eco-friendly paints was first noted about 10 years ago. The

paints were originally developed for use in hospitals and nursing homes, but as more people realized the health benefits, paint manufacturers jumped on board and have produced a variety of paints for the consumer market.

Low and zero VOC paints

The cost of low VOC paint is comparable to regular brands. In a check of paint stores in Ames, every store carried at least one low VOC brand.

Perry Foreman, trade sales product manager for the Iowa-based manufacturer Diamond Vogel Paints, says his company's product, Health Kote, has been evaluated by an independent laboratory and found to contain no VOC, far less than current EPA standards of 200 grams of volatile compounds per liter of paint, or 200/g/l. Foreman says that low VOC or no VOC

paints tend to dry faster because of the lack of solvents. A majority of these products are water-based latex and handle like other traditional latex paint. Adding conventional tint to the base paints increases the number of VOCs in each can because the tints themselves can carry varying amounts of VOCs.

If you require a paint that has no VOC, use a white paint rated zero VOC and do not add tints. Foreman said, "Current regulations count VOCs based on manufactured products prior to the addition of tint at the point of sale."

Tasha Tjernagel, store manager of Ace Hardware, said the store carries NatureScape paint with no or low VOC. The paint sells only in gallons, but she's hoping quarts will soon be available.

Sherwin Williams brands are either Harmony or Duration Home. Manager Stacey Agena said their products come in recyclable containers, another green plus.

All companies said the paints are available in at least two sheens, such as flat or satin; however, a full range of sheen options may not be available in any one brand.

Natural paints

Paints made from natural raw ingredients, such as water, plant oils, minerals like clay and chalk, milk proteins or essential oils are available on a more limited basis. Although they may be the safest for the environment, they may require special handling to apply them. For example, milk paint comes in a powder that must be mixed and results only in a matte finish.

Tips for healthy painting

- Buy only as much paint as you need. A gallon of paint covers about 400 square feet.
- Keep windows open and fans circulating to speed drying.
- Use a mask, especially if you have asthma.
- Clean brushes and rollers only when you're completely done. If you stop painting for an hour, a day or more, wrap the brush or roller in a plastic bag. Squeeze the air out of the bag and store away from sunlight for up to a week.
- Seal the used paint can well and store it upside down to prevent the paint from drying out.

Iowa-based manufacturer Diamond Vogel Paints offers Health Kote, which contains no VOC. Sherwin Williams brands with no or low VOC are either Harmony or Duration Home.

By Clare Bills/Special to Facets

How "green" is your garden? Well, now may be the time to ensure that it is truly sustainable. You can order seeds of wildflowers native to your region that will give you low-maintenance blooms next spring and all summer long. Not only will they thrive — they'll support native birds, insects and other pollinators that depend on familiar, home-grown species for a healthy ecosystem.

So advise many conservationists, including biologists in the National Wildlife Refuge System, the premier system of public lands and waters set aside to conserve America's wildlife and plants. National Wildlife Refuges strive to use native plantings or seeds on refuge land or plants unable to escape cultivation.

"Native species evolved in the local environment and have developed complex interrelationships with other area plant species as well as fine tuning to local climate and soil conditions," says Kathleen Blair, a Ph.D. ecologist at Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge in Arizona. Exotic plant species — non-natives, including many commercially available garden flowers — haven't. That means, she says, "if you plant non-native or exotic species, a whole lot of other local species cannot use them."

It's possible that going native might help save a local ecosystem, or at least parts of one. That's what motivates Pauline Drobney, a land management research demonstration biologist at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge in Iowa, where the staff is working to restore the globally threatened tallgrass prairie savannah. Each year, says Drobney, staff and volunteers plant up to 250 species of native plants on the refuge.

Does planting native mean sacrificing flash and drama? No way, says Drobney, who won over a skeptical neighbor by showing him the butterfly milkweed and blazing star in her yard. "It was just knock-your-socks-off color," she says.

Getting it right matters. Some non-natives or exotics have become ecological nightmares, escaping backyards to rampage across entire regions, choking out native species as they spread. Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*, native to Europe) is a prime example. "It's a nightmare of a plant. It's now clogging up the wetlands of the East Coast," says Blair.

Beyond that, planting an appropriate species will improve your odds of success. Some wildflowers are highly site-specific in terms of rainfall, elevation and soil type.

Native plants can generally be started either in seed trays at home in the winter or sown directly in the garden in spring. If you are directly sowing your seeds or putting ready-grown seedlings into a new bed, be sure the soil is bare (nothing growing in it)

To green your garden, go native

and free of weeds — native plant seeds cannot compete easily against weeds. While the seeds of some native plants may cost more and may be harder to find, they require less watering, fertilizer and pesticides, and are not as prone to damage from diseases and insects.

Here are just a few examples of some native wildflower favorites by region:

- Great Plains/Prairie: blazing star, cream gentian, fall sunflower, prairie phlox, prairie violet, heath aster, bird's foot violet. ("Not only does it bloom profusely, but it's the obligate host food for the rare regal fritillary butterfly," says Drobney about the last plant species.)
- Southwest: lupin, beard-tongue (or penstemon; a real hummingbird favorite)
- Chesapeake Bay watershed: butterfly weed, Joe-Pye weed (also known as trumpet weed), eastern or willow bluestar
- Southeast: bee balm, black-eyed Susan
- Pacific Northwest: broad-leaf lupine, spreading phlox
- Upper Plains: rigid goldenrod, wild lily
- Northeast: blue flag iris, New England aster

Drobney says Master Gardeners, who can be found through the USDA Extension Service (<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/>), are tremendous sources of information on native plants and home gardening. Eileen Robb is a Polk County, Iowa, master gardener, native plant expert and internist, who took an early interest in ecosystem recovery efforts underway at Neal Smith Refuge. Robb says, "Master Gardeners are not just garden club members, but highly visible volunteers who bring expert horticultural experience to local communities." You can also find information about many local home and garden centers on extension service Web sites.

For reliable information on plants native to your region, consult your local native plant society. Almost every state has one. Find yours through either the New England Wild Flower Society (enter <http://www.newfs.org/>, then search "native plant societies") or the Michigan Botanical Club (http://www.michbotclub.org/links/native_plant_society.htm).

Other good sources include:

- USDA Nature Resource Conservation Service <http://plants.usda.gov/> — provides a complete resource for all things plants
- Native Plant Information Network <http://www.wildflower.org/> — houses a native plant database and searchable image direc-

tory maintained by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

- Plant Conservation Alliance <http://www.nps.gov/plants/> — contains links to plant guides by region
- USDA Forest Service <http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/nativégardening/index.shtml> — offers a variety of links ad native plant information
- U.S. National Arboretum <http://www.usna.usda.gov/> — search "native plants"
- Iowa Prairie Network <http://www.iowaprairienetwork.org/> — recommends prairie resources
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service <http://www.fws.gov/> — search "native plants"
- National Wildlife Federation <http://www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife/create.cfm> — how to create a wildlife friendly garden
- Wild Ones <http://www.for-wild.org> — provides native plant landscaping practices and a large list of local chapters, links and educational information

Source: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



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What going green can do for you

By NICOLE LENZ

There's lots of talk about going green to save the Earth. What most forget is that while working to save our environment, we are also saving ourselves. By making just a few of the changes below, it's easy to go green while saving money and improving your health.

Recycle cans for money

It's even easier to recycle cans when you know that you'll be getting paid to do it. In Iowa, we are lucky enough to receive five cents each for many aluminum cans. Just take them to your local grocery store and reap rewards. By recycling those cans energy is also saved and used in many ways.

Install energy-efficient light bulbs

After old bulbs burn out, switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs. These trusty little bulbs will lower air-conditioning costs in warmer months by burning cooler and will lower electricity bills all year.

Wash clothes in cold water

Just by washing clothes in cold water when possible, energy savings will be in abundance. Without having to heat water for cleaning, electricity costs will go down with just the push of a button.

Unplug unused gadgets

Appliances that are used only occasionally and don't serve as an extra clock should



be unplugged and will save on electricity bills. Carbon emissions will also be less — saving the Earth one unplugged item at a time.

Wear green clothing

While your clothes don't have to be the color green, they can be organic. Since most cotton is often sprayed with harmful chemicals, organic cottons are a great alternative and are becoming easier to find. They are usually a little softer on the skin as well, which is a win-win for everyone. Check out many online stores to find a variety of green clothing that can be shipped right to your door.

Print smart

This is one that can be followed at work and at home. Printing on both sides of every sheet will not only save money but also save our Earth. Using recycled paper is also a smart way to save our forests.

Install motion sensor lights

Both inside and out, motion sensor lights can be used to save on electrical costs. Outdoor lights that might be left on all night can be used only when needed. This will also save on having to constantly remind others to turn off lights as they will only be on while movement is detected.

Decorate with plants

Having plants can not only liven

up an area but can also absorb indoor pollution. Luckily, plants such as red and English ivy are shown to reduce contaminants at a high rate, according to www.webmd.com. Go to your local greenhouse to pick your new plant today!

Eat smart

Eating grass-fed red meats is a smart step to staying healthy. These meats are usually leaner and better for your body. Grass-fed cattle are also not fed grain that was sprayed by various chemicals.

Buy a programmable thermostat

It may sound silly to buy something in order to save money, but this purchase will most definitely save money in the long run. With many to choose from to fit various needs, it's easy to find one that will be most helpful. These thermostats are able to turn down heat or air while everyone is sleeping or any other time that no one will notice. In a little over a year or less, the cost of this handy product should be paid back and will start to lower costs.

Sources:

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- www.worldwatch.org
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- <http://www.kwwl.com/Global/story.asp?S=11247975>



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When Marcia Brinks decided to remodel her 19th century home, she was intimidated by the magnitude of the project. "It was very scary to me to do this on my own," she recalled. One meeting with Ames Contracting Team was enough to put her fears to rest. "I always felt I could count on them," she praised. "I knew they would be straight with me."

The project is still a work in progress as Ames Contracting Team moves through Brinks' first floor at the pace she finds most comfortable. Her back porch, bathroom and study are complete, giving her old home a beautiful facelift for the 21st century. "The bathroom is just cuter than a bug," she said. Ames Contracting Team worked with Brinks to give the room a unique style. Geisinger Construction added a nook to the space to showcase a vanity Brinks' herself created and installed mirrors to suit her style. Benjamin Franklin Plumbing added fixtures to the wall to allow for the installation of an elegant vessel sink. Thompson Electric installed a new transformer,

allowing Brinks to add a heating coil to the bathroom floor for luxurious comfort.

Transforming this small room was all about small details and ACT paid careful attention to those. A window created an awkward space for a shower curtain and Geisinger Construction installed a track to accommodate a curtain properly for the very first time. Thompson Electric added wall sconces near the vanity. New storage space, a medicine cabinet, a built-in hair dryer, block glass in the shower window and bathroom fan were all installed to finish off a room that exudes charm and provides comfort and convenience for Brinks.

The bathroom is the crowning glory of a larger project which combined the home's two bedrooms into a large suite including a bedroom, study and bathroom. The remodel provides easier access to the bathroom for guests and gives Brinks more room to call her own.

The project hit a snag when it was discovered the flooring in the new

study needed to be redone. "Things you are not expecting always come up with an old house," explained Brinks. A new sub-floor was installed and Flooring Gallery came to the rescue, finding hardwood flooring to match the rest of the home. "I was happily surprised at cost because that could have been major and it wasn't."

With so many projects under her belt, Brinks will be ready to tackle a complete kitchen remodel this summer. She praised ACT for thinking ahead to that project and taking steps to decrease her costs and improve their efficiency. "They have obviously worked together a lot and they have such a way of working together I got off easy. It was hard to stay ahead of them."

Brinks has words of encouragement for women considering remodeling their homes on their own. "Other women can do this. Other women should use them. My house was built in 1895 and this is going to make it livable for another 100 years."

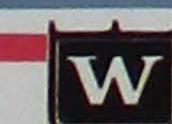


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Definition: Any loud clamor or protest intended to incite others to action.

By MARY HALSTRUM, *Facets Editor*

Recycling is good for the environment and the pocketbook. In economic times like these, throwing something away that can be used in some other way, or not turning pop cans in for 5 cents apiece just seems silly. Squeezing every little penny out of each and every household item not only makes good sense environmentally, it makes good sense economically.

My family has been repurposing things for years. I can't remember the last time I actually purchased small trash can liners, as I take the plastic bags I get from the grocery store and use them for that purpose. I save toys and clothes that belonged to my older daughter and pass them down to my younger daughter. And then after she's done with them, if they're still in good shape, they get donated to charity. My mother gives me clothes and shoes she's no longer interested in wearing, and I'm talking stylish items. My husband uses wood scraps from various side jobs to make things for our home such as a coffee table or a dolly for moving furniture. He also cuts old T-shirts up and uses them as work rags.

And then there's Katharine, our oldest, who absolutely loves to repurpose anything and everything. Recently, I tried to throw

away an old jean jacket of mine that was beyond repair when she piped up, "But Mom, don't throw that away. I can use it to make a craft." Ditto an old pair of my corduroy pants. As some crafts require fabric, the more she can use from something I no longer want, the less I have to buy for her. And the less I throw away, which helps with the overburdened landfill situation.

As a family, we try to recycle as much as we can, including newspapers, plastic, cans and cardboard. We also try to be mindful of those things that have special disposal instructions such as batteries, motor oil and the like.

I wish I could say that I buy household cleaners that are made specifically with the environment in mind, but products like these tend to be a little more expensive, so this endeavor will have to wait. But I am thinking about it, which is a good start.

As far as repurposing food items goes, my family's consumption of leftovers has increased dramatically since the economy took a nosedive. As our income has shrunk, wasting food seems even less appealing than it did before, if not just out-and-out wrong. In the past, when my daughters didn't finish their dinners I could always lob

out the "there are children starving in third-world countries" factoid, which remains true to this day.

For that matter, there are plenty of children starving in this country, too. But now I can also factor in the loss of income as I react to them eating two bites of their food, saying they're done, and then having them ask for popsicles 10 minutes later.

Back when my father was a child, there was rationing of items such as milk and butter during World War II, and my father seems to have been affected by those conditions in that he has always been extremely frugal. I was a teenager during the farm crisis of the early- to mid-'80s and remember growing up with the waste-not, want-not mentality. I wonder what impact the Great Recession will have on my daughters.

Here's hoping that when everything's good again with the economy, we won't forget about taking care of the environment, and we'll continue to recycle and repurpose items because it's the right thing to do, and if it helps our pocketbooks in the process, that's fine too.



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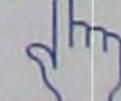
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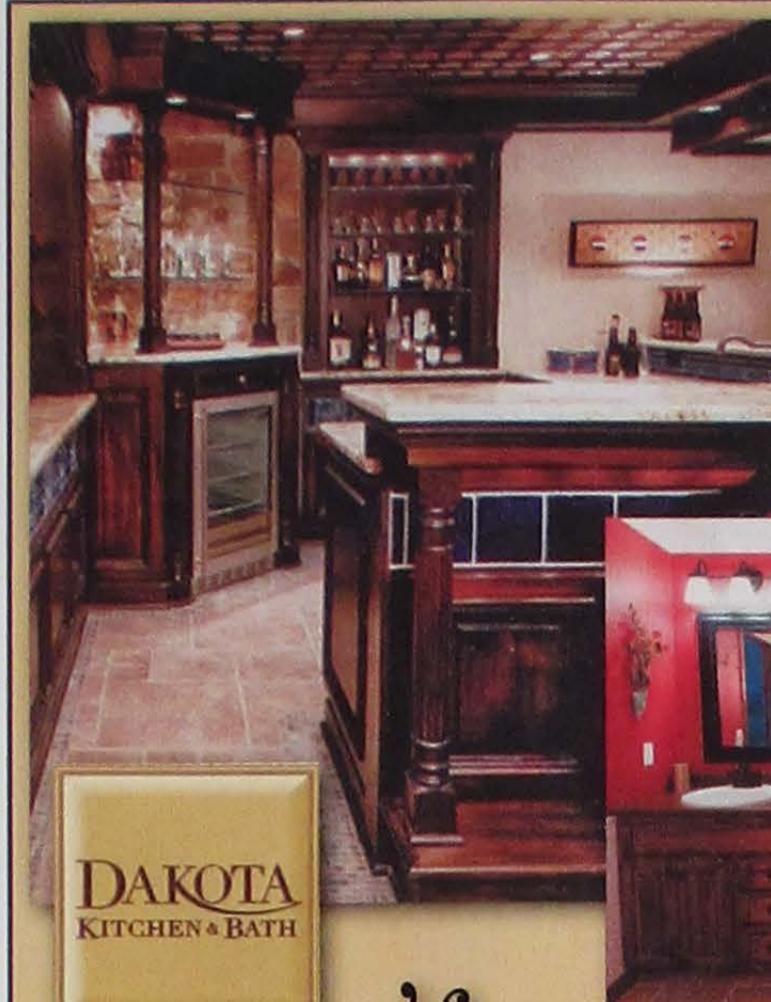
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